

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN DOING VERIFICATION

Prior to conducting Verification, refer to the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*, which may be downloaded at: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/EligibilityManual.pdf>.

Please share this information with the appropriate personnel conducting Verification.

- ☐ Start on **October 1**. The number selected for verification must be based on the total number of newly approved applications (i.e., Income, Temporary Family Assistance [TFA] and SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [formerly the Food Stamp Program]) on file by **October 1**.
- ☐ Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are not allowed to conduct **100 percent verification at the time of application**. Additionally, LEAs may *not* verify more than the sample size that is required. For example, a LEA must not select a few “extra” households to verify to be on the “safe side.” A LEA may only verify the total number of households determined by the calculation of the sample size.
- ☐ Prior to notifying the household that they were selected for verification, a confirmation review (to ensure that the application was determined correctly) must be done by someone other than the determining official. This must also be documented. Note: Any LEA that conducts a confirmation review of *all* applications at the time of certification is not required to conduct confirmation reviews at the time of verification. For more information refer to the *Eligibility Manual for School Meals*.
- ☐ LEAs must allow households to provide documentation of income from any point in time between the month prior to application and the time the household is required to provide income documentation for verification.
- ☐ Foster children are considered categorically eligible and are subject to verification. Refer to OM #13-11 for further information. The Q & A within this memorandum addresses verification of foster children. The OM may be found at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/DEPS/Nutrition/OPmemos/11/OM_13_11.pdf.
- ☐ Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI) that have **day students** must have approved meal applications or direct certification information on file to claim these day students as free or reduced. Verification will need to be conducted in those RCCIs that claim day students for free or reduced price meals.
- ☐ For *each selected household*, complete a **Verification Selection Worksheet**. This tracks the verification process and must be kept on file. This may be downloaded by going to the Child Nutrition Program Web site: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320644>.
- ☐ The following categories are **not** subject to verification and must **not** be included in the total number of applications when determining the Verification sample size: **Direct Certification Letters, homeless, runaways, children enrolled in Head Start and the names that are on a SNAP/TFA Direct Certification list supplied from the Department of Social Services (DSS)**.
- ☐ **Foreign Language Translations** of verification forms may be found by going to the following Web site: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FRP/frp.process.htm>. LEAs must make every effort to ensure that Limited English Proficiency households have access to foreign language translated forms.
- ☐ You no longer need to collect the social security information from the adults in the verified household.
- ☐ **Always round up** and make sure that the number of applications to be verified is correctly calculated. For example, if the sample size is 3.03, **4** applications must be selected for verification.
- ☐ Formal letters notifying households that they have been selected for verification must be sent and **copies of these completed letters must be kept on file in the school district**. Proper documentation is essential in order to demonstrate successful completion of the Verification process. Keep copies of everything. *Verification cannot be conducted over the phone*. It must be done in writing.

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- ▣ Letters of notification must give deadline dates for a response from the parents/guardians. Never say “as soon as possible” or “immediately.” Also indicate in the letter the consequences of their failure to respond (i.e., their child(ren) will no longer be eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits if they do not respond by the date indicated).
- ▣ All final letters notifying the household of a reduction in benefits due to verification must include **fair hearing procedures**. A sample letter of Adverse Action, which contains the fair hearing language, may be found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320644>.
- ▣ If a student selected for verification transfers out of the system during the verification process, the LEA must select another household application to be verified.
- ▣ Verification must be completed **by November 15**.
- ▣ If verification cannot be completed by November 15, then the school district must send a letter to Cheryl Resha, Education Manager, Child Nutrition Programs, requesting an extension and providing the reason for the request. This request must be received by the Child Nutrition Program office no later than **November 1**.
- ▣ Prior to completing the verification process, review and complete the **Sample School District Verification Check List** which may be downloaded at:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320644>
- ▣ The **Verification Summary Report** must be completed by *all LEAs* participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. This form and instructions will be available on the Child Nutrition Program website at a later date.
- ▣ As a reminder, when completing the verification process, categorize the district’s applications into the following categories:
 1. Households that are **not subject to verification** (These include children enrolled in Head Start, homeless and runaway children as well as households who submitted a DIRECT CERTIFICATION letter from the DSS.) If the district received a list of eligible children based on the SNAP/TFA from the DSS, these would also be in this category of not subject to verification because DSS authorized the list and verified the names.
 2. Applications that are **error prone**. Error prone refers to those approved applications that listed household income within \$100 monthly or \$1200 annually of the free or reduced price eligibility guidelines for that household size. Error prone does NOT include SNAP or TFA applications.
 3. Free applications based on **Categorical Eligibility** – TFA and SNAP case numbers.
 4. **Income** applications – applications where the household listed income (including Foster children).
 5. **Reduced Price** Income Applications.